

PRESS RELEASE

Erik C. Peterson
United States Attorney
Western District of Wisconsin
(608) 264-5158
TTY (608) 264-5006
www.usdoj.gov/usao/wiw

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Contact Person

Meredith P. Duchemin
Assistant U.S. Attorney

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Robert Eckert, 65, of Allen Park, Michigan, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Shabaz to 97 months in federal prison for possessing child pornography. On July 18, 2007, Eckert pleaded guilty to possessing child pornography at his home in Eau Claire, Wisconsin in July of 2004, and possessing child pornography at his current home in Michigan in April 2007.

Eckert's sentence was enhanced because of the violent nature of some of the pornographic images he possessed. During the sentencing, Judge Shabaz noted that although there is a tendency by some to label possession of child pornography as a victimless crime, every time a person views an image of child pornography for sexual gratification, the child in the photo is re-victimized. This is particularly true when the images are depictions of violence, Shabaz said.

This case has been brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, the U.S. Department of Justice created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to

better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The charges against Eckert were the result of an investigation conducted by the Eau Claire Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Laura Przybylinski Finn.

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